

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below:

1. (currently amended) A tip structure for a contact element, comprising:

a pad;

a contact tip disposed on a surface of the pad and having a distal end protruding above the surface of the pad; and

an alignment mark fixed relative to the pad and spaced apart from the contact tip.
2. (original) The tip structure according to Claim 1, wherein the alignment mark is recessed below the surface of the pad.
3. (original) The tip structure according to Claim 1, wherein the alignment mark protrudes above the surface of the pad.
4. (original) The tip structure according to Claim 1, wherein the alignment mark comprises a shape selected from a pyramid, an elongated pyramid, a cross, a circle, a square, a triangle, and parallel lines.
5. (original) The tip structure according to Claim 1, wherein the alignment mark is disposed on the pad entirely substantially below the distal end of the contact tip.
6. (currently amended) A contactor for contacting a semiconductor device, the contactor comprising:

a plurality of contact structures disposed [on] above the upper surface of a substrate and presenting a plurality of contact tips each for contacting a terminal of the semiconductor device;

means for aligning each of the plurality of contact tips with a terminal of the semiconductor device.

7. (original) The contactor according to Claim 6, wherein the means for aligning comprises a plurality of alignment marks on at least selected ones of the plurality of microelectronic contact structures and spaced apart from the plurality of contact tips.

8. (original) A contactor for contacting a semiconductor device in wafer form, the contactor comprising;

a plurality of contacts disposed on a substrate to present a plurality of contact tips having their distal tips in a plane substantially parallel to the substantially planar surface; and

a plurality of alignment marks disposed on the contractor substantially below the plane wherein the distal tips of the contact tips are disposed.

9. (original) The contactor according to Claim 8, wherein at least selected ones of the plurality of contacts further comprises a tip structure, the tip structure comprising a pad, a contact tip attached to the pad, and at least one of the plurality of alignment marks attached to the pad.

10. (original) The contactor according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one of the plurality of alignment marks is recessed below a surface of the pad.

11. (original) The contactor according to Claim 9, wherein the at least one of the plurality of alignment marks is raised above the surface of the pad.

12. (original) The contactor according to Claim 8, wherein at least selected ones of the plurality of contacts further comprise a tip structure, the tip structure comprising a first pad, and a contact tip attached to the first pad, and a second pad in substantially the same plane as the first pad, the second pad comprising at least one of the plurality of alignment marks.

13-43. (withdrawn).